

April 13, 2007

Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Honorable James T. Walsh  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we are writing to respectfully request that you fund career and technical education programs under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act at no less than the Fiscal Year 2007 level and to consider an increase for the program to keep pace with inflation, rising enrollments, and new program requirements.

The Administration's budget for Fiscal Year 2008 proposes elimination of over half the funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, from \$1.29 billion in Fiscal Year 2007 to \$610 million in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget. This budget eliminates Tech Prep funds, which go towards critical programs helping students make the transition between secondary and post-secondary institutions. Funding for the Perkins Act has been inconsistent and insufficient since Fiscal Year 2002. In fact, funds have actually decreased by \$17 million since that time.

As you know, career and technical education is crucial in providing youth and adults with the skills they need in a competitive global economy. Career and technical education provides students with the education and job skills necessary to find employment in skilled professions. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Standards' projections, eight of out of the top ten occupations with the largest job growth through 2014 will require an associate's degree or vocational training.

In 2006 Congress reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Vocation and Technical Education Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. Significant resources are needed to ensure the successful implementation of this Act and ensure American competitiveness in the future.

We understand and appreciate the fiscal constraints facing the Committee during these tight budget times. However, funding for these critical programs has failed to keep pace with the increasing need to prepare our workforce for a competitive global economy. We appreciate your support for career and technical education and urge you to fund career and technical education programs at no less than the Fiscal Year 2007 level and to consider an increase for the program to keep pace with inflation, rising enrollments, and new program requirements.

Sincerely,